

The PHOTODRAMATIST

THE SCENARIO WRITER'S MAGAZINE



IN THIS ISSUE

JUNE MATHIS
'GUY BATES POST
ADOLPH BENNAUER
VIANNA KNOWLTON
H. H. VAN LOAN
AND OTHERS

JUNE

25 CENTS



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The PHOTODRAMATIST



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The PHOTODRAMATIST



“The Key to the Studio Door”

By Vianna Knowlton

Of the Famous Players-Lasky Scenario Staff



VIANNA KNOWLTON

“I HEARD, Miss, you’re in the movies, an’ I want to get in an’ I wondered if you could tell me how?” The mail carrier in a small town voiced the plea. How could he get into a Studio? Oh, no! Not as an actor, but as a writer. He had “lots of grand ideas for pictures” and he knew that he could write “just as good as the one who wrote ‘Twiddle Your Thumbs’ for that new star, Flossie Fairhair.”

He confessed that once, in a burst of enthusiasm, he had written to the Studio which produced Flossie’s picture, saying that he would “take any job at all so’s to learn how to write,” but the Studio replied coldly and honestly that it was not a classroom and had not time in which to teach aspiring beginners. It was, however, always interested in original stories and a good original had been known to open the door of the Studio to the writer. The letter from the Studio had fired the mail carrier with ambition. He would write an original, an original so good that the Studio would pounce upon it and buy it, after which it would present him with the key to the Studio door. He, at once, had visioned himself adding that

precious key to his key-ring and proudly strutting through the door to the fame and fortune which were sure to lie beyond.

Alas, the dream had never materialized. He had discovered that other townspeople, the doctor, the lawyer and merchant, down to the butcher, the baker and the candlestick-maker were writing scenarios and bombarding the Studio with them. And it was his sad duty to deliver in the mail boxes of his fellow-townsmen the long thin, bulky envelopes containing the manuscripts rejected by Miss Fairhair. Never a manuscript was sent out that did not, in time, return,—and the manuscripts of the mail carrier were no exception. Discouragement had set in, and the whole town, plunged in despair, had muttered, “there ain’t no key to the Studio door, and if there be—it ain’t an original story.”

Said the merchant, “And I hated to give up, because I know there’s a fortune in writing for the screen if you can just land a story once. But we, outside, don’t stand a chance. They never read our stuff, or, if they do, they pick out the good ideas and keep them and send back the story to us. But I *would* like to be on the inside, for that’s where the money is.”

The baker’s complaint was this, “But I can’t see why they don’t take my stories. D’you remember how big those mother-love stories went over? Well, I wrote a story about a mother and her kids. Some-

thing like all the others but different, too. Did they buy it? No! And yet, it was packing the theatres. I worked on my story, too, and it was in good shape, good characterization, good plot and everything. Now tell me why they didn't buy it? But don't tell me that a good story will get you through the Studio door. It won't!"

The candlestick-maker grumbled, "Naw, it don't pay to write your story up too careful—all they want is the idea, I jus' jot my big ideas down an' send 'em off. Once, I almos' sold an idea but they said they wanted elaborating. Naw, I didn't sell it. Thought they could do the elaborating themselves. What else do they do? Don't they change every story, anyways?"

And the mail carrier ventured timidly again, "You're in the movies, an' I wonder-ed if you would tell me how to get in?"

To those who, like the mail carrier and his friends, continue to write in the face of innumerable rejection slips one can only say, "Go to it!" For the key to the Studio door will be in the lock for the writer who can produce an "original" original, *written according to the rules of screen technique.*

"If that's true, then why don't we get in?" clamors the mob. "We write good stories, if we do say so ourselves."

Many reasons might be given for the failure to hit the mark of the majority of scripts submitted to a Studio, but no three are more fundamental than those which have been illustrated in the complaints of our friends the merchant, the baker and candlestick-maker. Too long have the "merchants" believed that a fortune could be gathered over night if once they could get inside the walls of a Studio. And with the dollar sign for goal, many a "merchant" has turned author. To them money, not the play, is the thing and, consequently, the scenarios of the "merchants" continue to be ticketed as unavailable.

Imitation—and in many cases unconscious imitation,—is the second stumbling block. How often, after having seen a

successful picture, do we thrill with the desire to go and do likewise and, hastening to our desks do we grope about for an idea. Naturally, the first one which comes is similar to, if not identical with the theme of the story just witnessed. "A-ha," say we gleefully, "what was successful once will be again, particularly when dressed up in new clothes." Forthwith we spend hours, days, weeks in preparing our story—only to have the producer glance at it wearily and sigh:

"Yes, it's a creditable piece of work. Only trouble is, I've done it before. Why can't these authors keep one jump ahead of me?"

The "candlestick-maker" labors over the design for his new candlestick. He carves the stick carefully, measuring every curve, planning every detail. He paints it and burnishes it until it shines. It is as nearly perfect as he can make it. When he writes a scenario, however, he just jots down his big idea. Someone else can prepare the script, someone else can measure and construct it, someone else can polish it. But let someone else try to get the credit for it. No indeed! It was *his* big idea.

Do you see what I mean?

Thus, last but not least, comes the greatest factor for success, *preparation.* As the candlestick-maker prepares his candlestick, so must he prepare his story for Flossie Fairhair.

So, Mr. Mail Carrier, write your original story, not forgetting about the Merchant, the Baker, and the Candlestick-maker, and you will find that the key to the Studio door is almost in your hand.

(Editor's Note: Some months ago, Miss Knowlton, just graduated from Radcliffe College, submitted an unusually powerful 'original' photoplay to The Famous Players-Lasky Studio, when it was brought to the attention of William C. DeMille he lost no time in sending for her and in giving her a position on his scenario staff. From the very first, she "made good." Those who believe that "pull" is needed to get into the studios, and that training and ability are secondary should read her article thoughtfully.)



Yoricks of the Screen

By W. Arthur Williams

Mummers of life are we;
Maskers of personal pain.
But the wile of the smile
That our hearts beguile
May be the whole world's gain.

Building the Photoplay Plot

Basic Situation is Foundation Upon Which Screen
Drama Must be Erected

By Adolph Bennauer

THE Basic Situation of most photoplays may be said to be due to inspiration. Somehow, somewhere, we hit upon a novel and dramatic predicament, powerful enough to form the basis of a story, which is beyond the deliberate creation of any man. But inspiration is only second best, and never yet furnished an idea which, of itself, was sufficiently complicated to hold the interest of the spectator through more than two reels of action. The remaining three or four reels of a feature photoplay must be built up by Elaboration, a process which requires the keenest application of the photoplaywright's art.

The worst way in the world to elaborate a story is by expanding the Basic Situation. This process may be compared to that of enlarging a photograph, and really gives us no more story than we had in the beginning, but weakens the whole structure by irrelevant padding. We must leave this situation just as it stands, allowing it to form one of the three big crises of our plot, and prepare to build our finished photoplay from the elements that compose it,—namely, the Characters. Since Plot gives us Characters, quite as frequently as Characters give us plot, we will find that we have a Hero, a Heroine, and a Heavy already provided for. Each of these characters has cherished

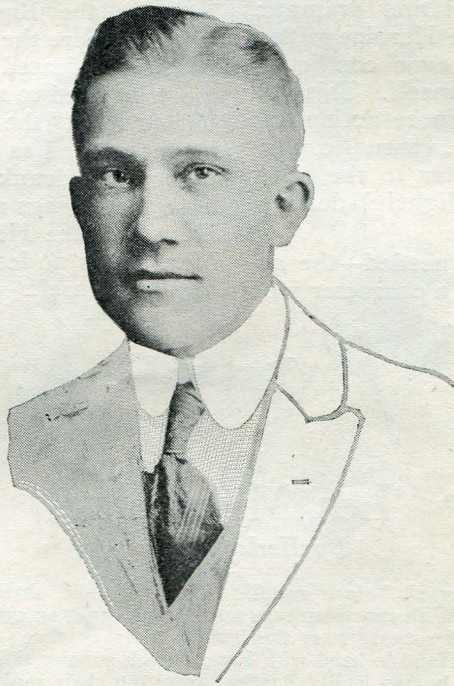
an ambition of some sort which led him into their present predicament and we must now study these Ambitions closely and endeavor to find out what other predicaments they are potentially capable of.

First in importance is the Ambition of the Hero. This Ambition may be for

riches, for the restoration of honor, for the amelioration of the race,—or for any one of a hundred other goals; but whatever its nature, it constitutes the Theme of our story and is its dominant Motif. The one big situation that should be derived from this Ambition is the Main Complication, that situation immediately following the introduction of the characters, which gives our plot its forward movement and tells us, in plain words, "what the story is about." Other manifestations of the Hero's Ambition should appear as the story progresses, but this should be by far the most pronounced one.

Next in importance is the Ambition of the Heavy. This Ambition rivals in intensity that of the Hero, himself, and forms the Obstacle which the latter must over-

come before he can attain his goal. It will be observed that Simple Ambition here gives way to conflict of Ambitions. This Conflict of Ambitions finds its first expression in the Big Predicament that situation located near the middle of our story where the Hero and the Heavy have their first open clash and



Few persons have ever presented as clear an analysis of the photoplay plot as that given by Mr. Bennauer in the accompanying article. We advise every reader to file this away, and to consult it when in doubt. The author, by the way, is an experienced photoplaywright himself, having written a number of successful screen dramas.

the Heavy becomes temporarily victorious, and its second expression in the Climax, where the two clash again and the Hero comes out triumphant. The situations involved in this conflict form the back-bone of our plot and should, in consequence, contain all the mental and physical punches that we are capable of injecting into them.

Of least importance is the Ambition of the Heroine. In most photoplays (unless the story contain a feminine lead) this is only a nominal Ambition and finds its chief expression in the Conclusion, where the Heroine gives herself to the Hero as the reward of his success. Our story will be made more powerful and dramatic, however, if we imbue the Heroine with a stronger Ambition, one even conflicting with that of the Hero, himself. This will not only give our story more action and better suspense, but the eventual capitulation of the one character to the other will provide a most delightful denouement.

Yet another person is needed—the accidental agency. Here is a character who

does not always appear in our Basic Situation. If he does not, we must create him, for his presence in our finished photoplay is quite as important as any of the characters named above. The chief function of the Accidental Agency is to provide the means of incentive through which the Hero overcomes his Obstacle and achieves success. It may safely be said that the Principal Characters get themselves into a predicament and the Accidental Agency gets them out of it. Like the rest of the characters, the Accidental Agency represents an Ambition. This Ambition manifests itself most forcibly at the Crucial Situation, that point between the Big Predicament and the Climax where the Hero, having been temporarily defeated by the Heavy, is once more inspired to attain his goal. In "Forbidden Fruit" the Accidental Agency may be recognized as the rascally butler who induces the drunken husband to write the note that brings about the reunion of the Hero and the Heroine; in "The Miracle Man" he is no less a person than the old idealist himself.



"Les Miserables"

By Herbert Sutton

They sit before my flickering, whitened shrine,
With careworn face and sorrow-stricken eyes,
And seek to pass the leaden hours of time
Hand in hand with Fancy 'neath sunnier skies.
All human frailty I reflect from out their ranks;
All human folly from their past I call;
And, without one "by your leave" or "thanks"
I give to them the Drama of their Fall.

I make them weep, they who have no tears to give,
I make them smile, who sorrow's cross must
bear.

I lure them forth with me to laugh again and live,
And free them from their crushing loads of
care.

Then when Dawn comes, they go!
Back to Winter's hunger-gnawing blast,
The Derelict, the Faltering, and the Weak.



What the Screen Actor Thinks Of the Photoplaywright

By Guy Bates Post

THE photodramatist has immeasurable advantages over his brother—or sister—who is content to write for the stage. Primarily, the desire of the storyteller is to get his tale to an audience, through the medium of the actors portraying his characters; and surely no theatrical tour—no matter how many years it lasts or how many countries are included in its itinerary—can compete with the international audiences which see the successful motion picture. Therein must lie the greatest source of satisfaction to the screen writer; added to it, are the technical opportunities before him on the screen, over and above the possibilities of the theatre, as well as the economic benefits.

What the actor thinks of the author is what every conscientious worker should think of his co-worker—what the soloist should think of the composer, what the builder should think of the architect,—or, to put it in the blunter terms of the commercial world, what the salesman should think of the manufacturer! The analogy is not always exact, but it is indicative of the truth. For the actor sells the photodrama to the public, the ultimate consumer.

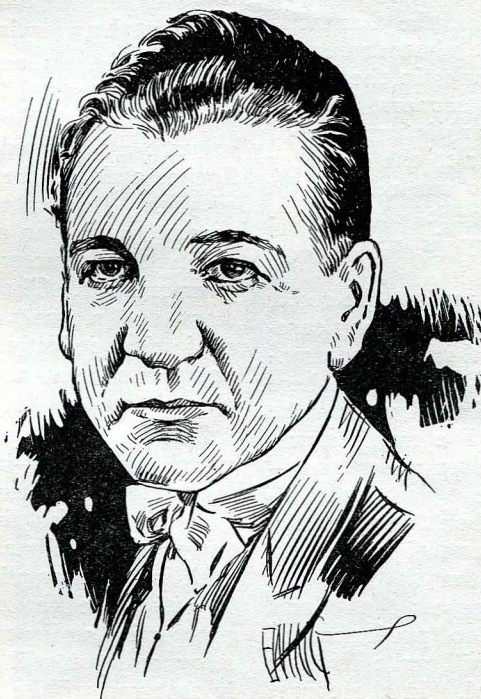
The old-time star vehicle type of picture, written to exploit the appearance or the favorite mannerisms of an individ-

ual player, has gone from the screen. And with it went the fervent prayers of all of us who are sincerely interested in the welfare of the screen, that its going shall be permanent. Happily for our wishes for the film world in general, it

seems that our prayers will be answered—except for sporadic instances.

As an actor, as well as a student of the films and of which pictures attain the greatest popularity, I should like to take this occasion to say a word of warning to the budding photodramatist. Beware of yielding to the great temptation, which undoubtedly exists, to let your typewriter ramble too far afield in the world of fancy. Practically nothing is impossible for the clever producer—i. e., in the line of scenery and mechanical effects, like double exposures, dissolves, et cetera. As a result, many scenarios read like the dreams of a hashish intemperate. The story shifts all over the world and sometimes even enters unexplored realms of dreamland and other hitherto unnavigated worlds.

Keep your story real. The object of the screen writer should not be to utilize the keenest imagination among his audiences; remember the multitude you are reaching and, while I have never advocated writing down to the lowest intelligence, let your story be such that it may be



Guy Bates Post may be numbered among the few really great actors of the speaking stage. His recent entry into the film world—for the purpose of aiding Richard Walton Tully in screening "Omar, the Tentmaker," and other of the latter's big successes—should be a distinct benefit to the motion picture art.

grasped by the great average, to which most of us belong. Do not make your audience strain its collective imagination; let your screen story give it the opportunity for relaxation. Not only will you please the people who see your photodrama; but you will do them a lot of good, give them a lot of pleasure, and attain a lot of popularity. Remember that—in the words of a certain dramatic critic—"the theatre is not a place to which one goes in search of the unexplored corners of one's imagination; it is the place to which one goes in repeated search of the familiar corners of one's imagination. The moment the dramatist—and this applies to the photodramatist even more strongly—works in the direction of the unfamiliar corners, he is "lost." The most popular pictures are of the type which is familiar to the ordinary experience; the spectator can respond to its action with ease, hence it holds his interest and, if the story is worthy, it gains his approval.

These words of advice are not the result of a swift survey, but rather of a long careful study of the screen and its photodramatic material. Moreover, I speak them here not merely as a layman, but also from the viewpoint of the actor. We can interpret far better when we ourselves understand—for understanding begets sympathetic interest and this, in turn, begets an artistic, convincing portrayal. Remember that you must write your story so that the actor can grasp its underlying purposes; thus alone, can he cooperate with you to "put it across."

Many a screen writer will write down to his audience—that is fatal. In the course

of extended tours of this country—and others—with various plays, I have always found the public everywhere will respond gladly to the best and most artistic. Concretely, even last year, when so much depression was in the air in the amusement world, I maintained the three-dollar-top scale of prices with the stage version of "The Masquerader." In one evening, at Tulsa, Oklahoma, our box-office receipts were \$4301.00, a record for that city and, I believe, a record for one night's receipts in a standard theatre for a dramatic attraction. I mention this here, because it is within my personal experience and because it illustrates the point I am trying to make.

Similarly, do not write down to your actor. Fortunately, the actor in films today has a greater experience, a finer background, a wider education, a higher intelligence and a more artistic capability than of yore. Remember this and take it into account, when you are tempted to decry his ability to characterize the personages in your creation. The combination of a good story and a good actor, speaking of the profession collectively, is sure to mean a popular success as well as a worthwhile photodrama!

The dying out of the stellar vehicle—strictly speaking—indicates firmly that the successful photodrama should be not merely a chance for the actor to display his tricks of technique. Give him something with innate dramatic force, something that is within the ken of himself and of your prospective audience—in short, a real good story, and you will have "arrived" so firmly that you will be successful thenceforth.



The Miracle

By Alice Musser

Hushed fell the wind,—and darkly
Like a pall across a bier,
Black clouds obscured the sunlight;
And softly, as a tear,
The rain fell down upon the earth
Brown-burned and sere from summer's sun.
The dead thing stirred as at God's word;
And swiftly, joyfully, the Spring had come.



“Simple—but Gripping”

Greatest Screen Dramas Achieve Fame by Appealing
to the Heart of Humanity

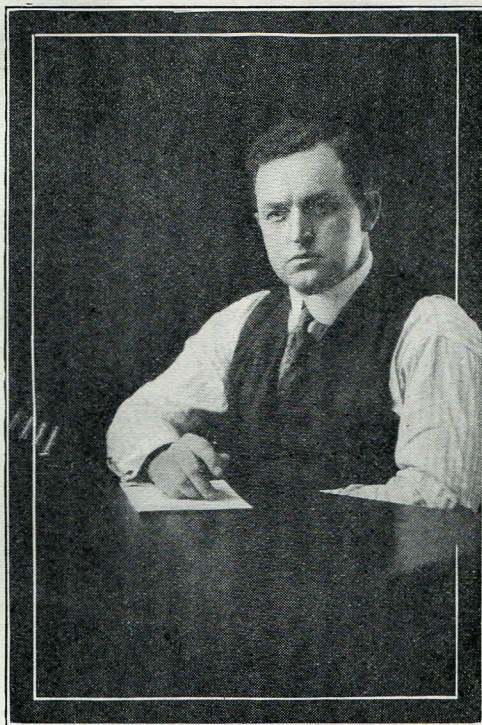
By Douglas Mack

THE trouble with most writers for the silver sheet is that they under-estimate heart appeal, the factor that I have come to believe leads all others. We attend the theater and witness a story which has no given star performer, and is, in comparison with many features of the day, literally unadvertised. We find it to be a picturization rated by fandom as a “simple little story.” It features no unusual stunt or plot, not even, perhaps, bearing a thrilling climax. Yet we leave, possibly after a second showing, feeling like a new being. Our emotions, which do not differ from those of the majority who attend the movies, have been aroused by heart interest. Thereupon, a resolve is made to begin at once the writing of the greatest photo-play of all time, with heart interest the main appeal.

But while rummaging about in the recesses of our thought corners for the proper idea, we attend the performance of a picture that advertisements have told us cost “umsteen” thousand dollars and required many persons in the making. Critics have been very kind to it. Thus we are prepared to witness what we presume will be the greatest yet.

As the scenes are unfolded the realization comes that the picturization is letter perfect, the acting well done, the writing exceptionally clever. Yet there

is something lacking. Outside, though, we see the box office besieged by a waiting line; naturally, as writers, we glean that this is what Mr. and Mrs. Public demand and realize we must cater to them, if success would be ours.



“Stories that reach the heart, stories of true love and its value to a weary world—these will bring a real reward to the one who writes them,” says Mr Mack. Those who write, not for money alone, but because they wish to make the world happier, will agree with him. The others, we believe, must eventually accept his point of view—or meet with failure.

That night, at The Neighborhood, the attendance is swelled by unpaid advertising. Eventually the modest success is bound to come back to the writer of the story in the form of a request for more efforts of similar appeal.

So we retire to our studios, smoke innumerable pipefuls of the favorite brand (if men) and burn midnight electricity attempting to write a great scenario. Mostly they are rejected.

Meanwhile, a brother or sister writer pens a little story of love and human heart and its value to a weary world, and it is accepted. When produced it does not come forth with trumpets blaring, but John and Sarah Jones review it at the Neighborhood Playhouse and more than one real, honest-to-goodness snifle is detected emitting from their locality.

Next morning John tells his business partner “The Unusual Boomerang” is well worth seeing, “simple but gripping,” he declares. Mrs. Jones informs Mrs. Miller of the dandy picture.

(Continued on Page 36)



Beauty and Brains

is a rare combination. However the steady rise of Colleen Moore, shown above, indicates that she possesses both. She has been selected to play the lead in "Broken Chains," Winifred Kimball's \$10,000 prize photoplay.

The Screen Drama of Tomorrow

Successful Photoplay of the Future Must Give
Public Real Food for Thought

By Colleen Moore

A FRIEND of mine—a newspaper woman—says she has never interviewed a woman from any walk of life who has not sometime during the interview said, with a tender smile, that she has often considered writing as a possible expression for her thoughts.

There is undoubtedly something romantic about the idea of writing. Probably this comes from the fact that the medium is so simple that almost everyone can afford the necessary instruments for the art—a pencil and some paper.

Comparatively few persons who have never received any training think they can leap in and paint a masterpiece before breakfast, but any number believe it quite possible to evolve a plot, write it out as a synopsis, and sell it before time for dinner. The peculiar thing about this is, that it is quite possible to do it—if one knows English and has thorough technical training.

Undoubtedly it would have been good form for me to have announced at the very beginning that I am not a writer—but it seems more reasonable to just proceed and let whoever happens to read this deduce that fact as he goes along.

That there is something wrong with screen stories, most persons in the profession and many outsiders are willing to admit.

If a popular book is scenarioized and produced there is almost certain to follow a flood of criticism—which would seem to prove that after all, writing direct for the screen, as Rupert Hughes advises, is one of the answers.

Frequently I see a much advertised and exploited picture, which just escapes

being clever because there is a weakness in the story. When I mention this to some of my writer friends, they tell me the weakness was in the direction and acting, so it becomes a matter of personal opinion.

I doubt if those of us who are actively engaged in some angle of the making of moving pictures can properly gauge a screen production. We pick flaws in the wrong places and put the emphasis where it is least required.

However, I have observed of late that those who are most vitally concerned in the making of pictures—namely the producers—have conceded that the trouble with many of their productions has been the story.

Concerning the technical end of scenario writing, I know nothing, but judging by the scripts that are given me to read when I am to have a part in a picture, I should say the art of writing for the screen and that of writing for any other medium is as different as doing a pencil sketch or a portrait in oils.

What does the public want in stories?

A well known theater owner told me the other day that the public wanted something that it could afford and that would cost it no mental effort.

Personally, I do not agree with him. I believe the public has arrived at the place where it will be glad to do a little thinking, and that the picture of tomorrow will depict life in a much more subtle and scientific manner.

The lily-white heroine and the gold-lined hero are all tired out—even though they have found themselves in many and varied situations. Also the Good Old Public is a bit fed up on them.

“Think In Pictures

when you write photoplays,” is the advice of Miss Moore, who states that there is a tremendous demand at present for really good stories, written directly for the screen by persons who are willing to master the principles of scenario technique.

Reviewing the various pictures that have been presented with booms and bangs of propaganda, one discovers that nearly every form of life, ancient and modern, has sometime been picturized.

We have had Bible films, metaphysical pictures, sex themes, home and mother stories, humorous, satirical and comedy scenarios, sordid, sad, heavy and light pictures; and there have been done into screen productions most of the extremely popular plays and short stories of the past decade.

Yet with all the material that has been produced, despite all the books, stories, and plays still available, there are many writers who are writing salable "originals" for the screen—and scores of them have had no previous writing experience.

This fact, together with the tremendous demand for screen stories, should encourage those who think they have scenarios lurking in their brains.

In any event there is nothing to be lost by writing down one's ideas—and if there is a life story that has interested you, it may easily happen that it will be interesting to portray on the screen.

The expression: "Think in Pictures," would seem to be reasonable advice—if one knew exactly what is meant by it.

Naturally because I have been thinking in screen language for some time, I can't think in any other way than by visualizing the story that presents itself to my mind, but I imagine there are those who know more about writing who will find it very difficult to "think in pictures."

Presenting life on the screen is the aim of numerous producers, and this after all is the answer to the scenario—but life is varied and complicated. Yet it must be translated into simple, practical picture expression if it is to be successful.



OPTIMIST—a picture producer who believes that his coming production is so clean that it will be passed by every Board of Censorship.



AN Eastern politician advocates "intelligent censorship." Ere long, we presume, we shall be hearing of "artistic ditch-digging."



"The Eternal Three"

By Mabel Young Stohm

"THE ETERNAL THREE" is certainly a correct title—for everything. I read constantly about the "Eternal Three" as being used so often in photo-plays, and I fell to wondering where one could find anything else, even in the case of a woman, doing her housework: the woman, cleanliness and dirt. Sometimes dirt predominates; and sometimes cleanliness, aided by the woman, whips the villain and he disappears.

When a woman takes care of her sick child, there's the woman fighting death, and trying to re-instate King Health who has lost his throne.

If a housewife wishes to do a little

fancy-work there's pleasure trying to win the woman from house-work, who holds her as a slave.

One would think a disobedient child would be one character; but there, mischief is trying to get the upper hand of duty, with the child as the object to fight over.

They tell us we see too much of the "triangle business" in stories and plays, but it seems as though it must be a triangle to be true to life.

What is life itself but the "Eternal Three?" Man, Life and Death. And even after death, there is Man, Eternal Happiness or Eternal Misery—so we are told.

Don't Be "Half-Baked"

Proper Preparation for Photoplay Writing Urged
by June Mathis, Noted Scenarist

By Charles E. McCarthy

IF you would write—don't be half-baked. That's June Mathis' advice to young and ambitious scenario writers.

"Be sufficiently prepared so that you understand story logic," explained Miss Mathis. "Many amateurs get very clever single ideas, but they are unable to fabricate other incidents to back them up. A plot is a mosaic of many things. A clever original idea may be the central point that sells a plot—but unless the plot as a whole is fundamentally correct from a dramatic standpoint it will not sell."

When June Mathis urges preparation she knows what she's talking about. She prepared for two years before she tried to sell a story. She was a girl who had a reputation as an actress. She had played ingenues and leads with such stage successes as "The Vinegar Buyer" with Ezra Kendall, "Brewster's Millions" and with Julian Eltinge in "The Fascinating Widow." Then she decided to write and now she is one of the best-paid and most successful scenario writers.

But June Mathis has never written a half-baked scenario.

Her debut as a motion picture writer was vastly different from that of the average person who gets a story idea, spends half an hour writing it—ships it off to a motion picture company—and in two weeks receives the story back plus

a nicely worded rejection slip.

Stories thus written—and they make up 99 out of every one hundred received at the average studio, are truly "half-baked" because the writer is not trained in dramatic essentials; he knows nothing of motion picture procedure, he is not even familiar with the great literary classics which form the background for all truly successful writings. In many cases your "half-baked" scenario writer is not a sufficiently thorough student of pictures as they are shown in the theaters to be aware of the changing fashions of cinema.

As an actress June Mathis was once asked to write an article for the paper of a town in which she was playing with Eltinge in "The Fascinating Widow."

It was a good article.

"Why don't you write?" said the editor, "you have splendid ideas."

The seed stuck and sprouted.

Success as a writer meant a cessation of a ten-year's tiresome one night stands, of moving from place to place:

it meant a home for Miss Mathis and her mother.

"But I was an actress and knew nothing at all about writing as a profession," Miss Mathis relates, "I knew acting—but putting acting in words, that was a different matter. Who was I to start



Few screen dramatists have achieved the high position held in the motion picture world by Miss Mathis. She has written thirty successful "originals," as well as having adapted a number of books—among them being "The Four Horseman of the Apocalypse," one of the great pictures of all time.

right out, immediately to emulate professional authors who had been studying their jobs for years?"

And so Miss Mathis did something all young writers could well emulate—but they never do! For two years she did nothing but study writing. She read everything Shakespeare ever wrote. She read drama from the early Miracle plays to Oscar Wilde and Augustus Thomas. She read Poe, deMaupasant, Dickens, Thackeray, Balzac, every writer who possessed a point of style that might be valuable. She read books on construction. She wrote thirty stories and rewrote them so that each had two or three different beginnings and two or three different endings. She'd take a story and chop it up and twist it around and play with it—and then put it back in her trunk and start on another idea.

She didn't make the mistake of submitting a "half-baked" scenario. She never tried to sell herself as a writer until at the end of two years she KNEW that she knew the fundamentals, the basic principles of the art she was entering.

At the end of that time she wrote a scenario around the play of a well-known playwright.

After several days Director Edwin Carew phoned the playwright.

"I don't want your play," he said, "But

I would like to talk with the young woman who wrote that scenario. It shows cleverness and a knowledge of dramatic requirements."

And in one little phone call—and a two years' wait—June Mathis achieved her goal. And all because two years didn't seem too long as a training for a profession which above all requires both wide and definite knowledge.

She became scenario writer for Metro, wrote there for several years, and then sprang into instant fame with "The Four Horsemen." Now she is with Famous Players-Lasky where she has just completed the adaptation of "Blood and Sand," another great story by Vincente Blasco Ibanez. "Blood and Sand," with Rodolph Valentino as star and Fred Niblo directing, promises to be one of the most colorful pictures of the year, carrying still further the fame and fortune of the young woman who had sense and patience enough to wait.

"I don't wish to set myself up as a supreme example," says Miss Mathis, "but I do think that 99 out of one hundred would-be scenario writers would save themselves disappointments if they'd take a long period of study and practice before attempting to sell a story. At the end of two years you either know that you have writing ability—or that it's all hopeless."



Palmer Photoplay Corporation Plans Move to Heart of Filmland

READERS of *The Photodramatist* who are, or have been, students of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation will be interested in the following item from the Hollywood Daily Citizen of Monday, May 22nd:

"Officers of the Palmer Photoplay Corporation began, this morning, active preparation for the moving of their business to Hollywood, where they will occupy the second and third floors of the Palmer Building and a fourth floor, work on the addition of which will be commenced immediately.

"An indication of the field of activities of this corporation was given in the remarks of Marion Fairfax at the dinner tendered by the Chamber of Commerce to Dean Woods of the University of California summer schools, when she stated that one of the biggest needs of the motion picture industry today was instruction in the work of scenario writing, and that the only course to which the Screen Writers' Guild had given its endorsement was that being offered by the Palmer Photoplay Corporation."

PAST -- AND FUTURE



THIS is our anniversary.

Anniversaries signify growth, and we cannot help but feel that the growth of *The Photodramatist* has been phenomenal. Started three years ago as a mere pamphlet, it has steadily increased in size, appearance and circulation, until today it stands preeminent in its field—a magazine of international importance, which has repeatedly been recognized as the most reliable authority in the world of screen drama.

Credit for this achievement may be laid to the absolute sincerity of purpose which from the first has marked its editorial policy. There has been no attempt to advance by means of false promises, bluster or misleading advertising; no effort to build upon the shifting sands of sensationalism. Instead, those behind *The Photodramatist* have clung tenaciously to the idea that real success must inevitably follow a conscientious effort to render a truly constructive service to screen writers, and the results have more than justified their faith.

However, as satisfactory as the progress of *The Photodramatist* has been, the publishers have no intention of resting upon their laurels. They realize that no success is so great as to justify the possessor thereof in ceasing to strive for higher standards. With this thought in mind, plans have been perfected for a bigger and better magazine—a publication that will be as greatly superior to the present *Photodramatist* as it, in the past, has been to the other magazines in its field.

This radical change will be inaugurated with the July number, when *The Photodramatist* will be issued as a standard, flat-size magazine, as perfect mechanically and artistically as human ingenuity can make it. Not only will it be larger by fully fifty per cent than it is at present, but we believe that, with the addition of new departments and articles which the increased size will permit, it will be of infinitely more value to those who write, or who aspire to write.

Most notable of the new features will be a short story department, wherein fiction writers of international reputation will discuss each month the technique of the short story. This feature, however, will be different from any appearing in other magazines, since especial attention will be given to the construction of stories which will have value not only as fiction, but also as motion picture possibilities. A series of instructive, yet interesting, articles on the use of good English, contributed by noted authorities, will also be an institution with the new *Photodramatist*. H. H. Van Loan's "Own Corner," by special arrangement with this well-known scenarist, will be greatly amplified, while the other departments will be even more valuable and helpful than they have been in the past.

In fact, *The Photodramatist* for the coming year will not be a magazine for scenario writers only. It will be a fountain head of inspiration and instruction for all writers—larger and better than any other similar publication in the world today.

IN THE FOREGROUND



Being a Department of Brief Chats on Topics Within The Camera's Range

Corrupting the Children

MUCH arrant nonsense has been written within the past few months by persons who believe, or claim to believe, that the morals of our children are rapidly being corrupted by motion pictures, and that unless "something is done about it" very soon, we shall become a race of criminal morons.

The editor of *The Photodramatist* has been greatly interested in this movement to save the children. Like all good citizens, we do not want the children corrupted and are willing to do whatever lies within our power to see that they are not. We must admit, however, that we have had our doubts in the matter. For one thing, we have never believed that the present day youngster is one whit worse than his father and mother were in their adolescent days. In fact, we have always considered that the boys and girls of today are, on the whole, more advanced, both morally and intellectually, than their forbears. They ought to be. The world has progressed rapidly in every branch of science and of art. What reason is there to believe that it has gone backward in the matter of morals and of intellect?

Motion pictures became popular some twelve years ago—at which time, by the way, "reformers" were bewailing the "corruption of children" just as vehemently as they are at present. The progress of the screen art was rapid. Mistakes were made, we must admit. Some of the early productions were lurid. Yet persons of today who, at the age of fifteen, were subjected to their influence, are now, by some curious quirk of fate, substantial young men and women attending to business and to their homes just as diligently and conscientiously as the ones who went before them.

We have never yet, as a matter of fact, seen any accurate proof of the statement that the morals of the present day child are at a low level. Despite the ranting of paid speakers and writers, none of them has as yet produced statistics to show that young America is drift-

ing toward degeneracy. However, we have found ample proof that the children of today are much more advanced morally and intellectually than those who did not have the opportunity of visiting the neighborhood film theatre.

When one wants information regarding the health of the country, one must go to the physicians who can produce accurate records of illness and of death. Accordingly, in search for the truth regarding the morality of present day children, we must inquire not of the so-called "reformers" but of men whose profession brings them into close contact with the misdeeds of the young and who keep on file the statistics concerning them. Such a man is Presiding Justice Franklyn Chase Hoyt, for years in charge of the Children's Court of New York, a city in which, because of the congestion of its population, juvenile delinquency is probably more prevalent than in any other.

Judge Hoyt states emphatically in his latest annual report that "the court statistics for the past ten years show a continuous and gratifying improvement in the matter of juvenile delinquency." Moreover, in his report—which is considerably too long to reprint here—he gives the figures to prove this assertion. Analysis of the statistics he presents shows that, despite a steadily increasing stringency in juvenile laws and the growth in population, the number of children brought before him since 1912 has been smaller each year than in the one preceding. Considering that there are over seven million persons in New York City, it is astounding to learn that during the year 1921 there were but 10,445 children brought before the Juvenile Court, of which number 5,490 were arraigned merely for the purpose of appointing for them proper guardians. In the light of Judge Hoyt's experience and that of juvenile workers in other cities, who, in the vast majority of cases, report a similar decrease in immorality and law-breaking on the part of children, we cannot help but believe that the "reformers" who are assailing the motion pictures on the grounds that they "cor-

rupt" our children are either plain liars seeking political or financial emolument, or that they are at least ignorant and a greater menace to America than they would have us believe that the films are. Certainly none of them, so far, has been able to back his vitriolic statements with proof. We are convinced, as a matter of fact, that the motion pictures, far from corrupting the children, have been the one influence that is responsible for the steady improvement reported by Judge Hoyt and others since 1912. At any rate, it is significant that this improvement began in the very year that motion pictures took their place as the highest form of amusement in America.

A Step Backward

PERSONS who have followed the career of Charles Ray cannot help but be interested in his recent announcement that he is abandoning the policy of producing original photoplays and will hereafter film only published fiction and successful stage plays. In a statement to the press Mr. Ray says that a clause to this effect has been incorporated in his new contract with United Artists. Whether this policy is a result of the young star's own desires or whether it has been adopted at the request of his advisors, we do not know. We do know, however, that both Mr. Ray and the United Artists are making a decided error. Even were it not for the fact that all the larger studios are veering away from adaptations and more and more toward originals, the fact would still remain that Charles Ray achieved his early success largely because his stories were written directly around his personality, and one would believe that a moment's thought would cause him to realize that he is treading upon dangerous ground indeed, when he enters into an agreement to produce

only adaptations. We have in mind two Charles Ray productions, "Forty-five Minutes from Broadway" and "The Midnight Bell," adapted from stage plays, both of which were huge disappointments to his followers, although he is reported to have paid large sums for the picture rights.

On the other hand, every lover of motion pictures remembers such Charles Ray successes as "Alarm Clock Andy," "Greased Lightning," "Paris Green," "The Busher" and many others based upon original scenarios. Although we regret, having admired Mr. Ray's artistry, that he has failed to profit by past experiences, we presume that possibly his two coming years' experiment will be of value to him in that it will teach him that no man is so well grounded in his profession that he may abandon the policies that brought about his success. And we predict that at the end of the two year period Mr. Ray will be once more an ardent advocate of original photoplays.

Something to Think About

A YOUNG woman in San Francisco, a nurse by profession, wrote us recently to the effect that she was "through with photoplay writing." She informed us that although she has studied diligently for more than six months and has written two screen dramas, her efforts have been received so frigidly by the studios to which they were submitted, two scenario editors having returned her stories without comment, that she realizes the "utter futility" of ever hoping to succeed in the world of motion pictures.

This letter is little different from many received by the editor of *The Photodramatist* each month. It chances, however, that we have been acquainted for some years with the writer of the missive under discussion; and, knowing the facts pertaining to her career, we

Faith

By Elbert H. Saulmon

HAVE Faith. Make Faith your trustworthy servant. Faith will serve you! Take Faith into your confidence—into your heart. Let Faith represent you to your God—the Power Supreme! Put Faith into your work. Remember, works without Faith are dead! Inasmuch that you have Faith, inasmuch will you create. You may never build the Master Photodrama, but your efforts will be fitting to your amount of Faith! Faith in creating and creating in Faith are one and the same. They are mortally inseparable. But Faith is to creating what the soul is to the body—it is the Life! So have faith in yourself, in others, and in your God. Faith is of the Infinite, limitless, powerful!

feel that a great lesson for aspiring photodramatists may be drawn therefrom. We know, for instance, that she is considered one of the most capable nurses in the Red Cross. Her record during the war was so unusual that it elicited favorable comment from those highest in army medical circles, and she is at present the wearer of several medals awarded to her for efficient and intelligent service in Europe during the recent hostilities. As she is the author of an unusually interesting and well written book upon Red Cross work, we know also that she possesses a solid foundation in literary skill, upon which undoubtedly she could build a successful career as a scenarist as soon as she has mastered the different technique of the photoplay.

Undoubtedly there are many others similar to this young woman—persons who, possessing every qualification for scenario writing excepting the necessary training—become discouraged before they have barely knocked upon the doors of the studios. Many of them are masters of other professions and did not think it unusual that from three to five years were required for the special technical training pertaining thereto. A nurse, for instance, to become really proficient, must undergo at least three years of rigid discipline and study before a doctor will entrust even ordinary cases to her care. Yet, nursing, as compared to scenario writing, brings a very small measure of fame and even smaller financial compensation.

It is high time that people ceased considering scenario writing as a trivial profession that may be mastered by the most casual study and within time limits which would be considered ridiculous in any other line of occupation. Despite the occasional example of so-called

"sudden success"—which, upon investigation invariably reveals the fact that years of study are behind it—the fact remains that the rewards in the scenario writing profession go to those who are willing to give it the same measure of attention that they would accord to any other line of endeavor.

Vision

IT WAS Solomon who said, "Without vision the people perish." Vision is a part of our lives. It isn't so much what a man knows as it is whether or not he has foresight to apply his knowledge—and, lastly, to apply that knowledge to his everyday life.

Vision is a part of one's imagination. Imagination can be developed and expended through his creative powers. One sure development of all his powers is through study of the eighth art—screen drama.

Imagination enables a man to muster his knowledge of a subject into real action. Knowledge without action is a form of decay. By invigorating the imagination man automatically obtains this knowledge.

The difference between the digger of ditches and the captain of industry is the relative ratio between the two elements—creative imagination and visualization. Without either, man sinks into oblivion.

Vision and imagination give a man a practical way of thinking. They awaken smouldering ambitions. They make the desire to *do* almost overwhelming.

Therefore let us never forget this one great truth—before a man can possibly succeed in anything (and this includes all of us) he must have knowledge, imagination and creative power.



The Time I've Lost

By Gordon Kyle

The time I'd lost in trying,
In ignorance defying
The artful maze
Of Photo-plays
Had set my Hope a-flying.
When Wisdom one day sought me
To learn the Art that taught me
The only way
To write a play,
And Wealth is what it's brought me!



The Screen Drama League

An Organization to Combat the Censorship Evil

Political censorship—with all the vicious, insidious elements that enter into that plan of regulating motion pictures—seems doomed for early defeat in every locality in which it has gained a foothold, according to press reports from all sections of the country. The Screen Drama League has exerted no little influence in impressing upon the public the utter futility of a system of control that is based upon principles extant during the Dark Ages. At all times, however, we have been in the foreground in the fight for better pictures.

In all probability, many advocates of censorship are in sympathy with the very ideals which the League has attempted to champion. In fact, a large majority of persons who have voted for censorship have been deceived by dishonest, office-seeking leaders, who see in censorship a source of income and would use their official positions as a club with which to gain more power.

Everybody wants clean pictures—everybody, that is, excepting a few evil-thinking morons. And these latter persons are not within the ranks of the picture producers either, despite the efforts of demagogues and so-called “reformers” to make the public believe that they are. Indeed, considering the ability that certain censors possess to “read” evil into the most innocuous productions, we sometimes believe that more than one salacious-minded person sit on the very boards that have been elected, or appointed, to judge what the people shall, or shall not see.

Members of the Screen Drama League will be pleased to learn that there is a strong movement on foot to maintain high standards in motion pictures through the people themselves. A standard, of course is always a variable thing. What

is the highest form of art, to one person, is veritable rubbish to another; what might be termed rank indecency by John Smith would not suggest any evil whatever to Jim Jones or Mary Jane. This is a situation, however that cannot be altered. Those who seek better pictures can only work for productions that will

be approved by the great majority. And the small minority, be they too far to one side, or too far to the other, cannot be considered. One-hundred percent perfection—in an art—may come with the millenium; but until Providence casts all human beings in the same mould, no two persons will form the same opinion of any one book, story, play or photodrama.

Censorship, as the Creed of the League plainly states, is based upon minority control, and must be abolished. In place of it—if any regulation at all is necessary—a system must be devised whereby the voice of the majority will be heard—and heeded.

This same sentiment was voiced at a recent meeting of the Better Pictures Association of the World, held in Los Angeles on May twelfth. Among those who addressed the audience were ministers of the various churches, business men, clubwomen and the president of the Southern California Parent-Teachers Federation. The motion picture interests were represented by Frederick Palmer, for years a leader in the movement for high standards in the picture world. Mr. Palmer, in his talk, spoke especially upon the difficulty that producers are having in securing stories worthy

of artistic production. In fact, he said, faulty stories have had much to do with the dissatisfaction expressed by many with motion pictures in the past. However, he stated that

(Continued on Page 36)

Our Creed

1. To free screen drama from the burdens of minority censorship, political exploitation and the emasculating influence of organized propaganda.

2. To assure to the photodramatist the same freedom of expression accorded to authors, artists and other creative workers.

3. To secure for the photodramatist the right to submit his work to the public un mutilated, thereby assuring him a review by the majority, subject only to proper police regulations.

4. To support and encourage makers of clean and worthy pictures, and to discourage the manufacturers of unworthy pictures by refusing patronage to them.

5. To encourage school, social and parental supervision of children's film entertainment by selecting for them those pictures which are most suitable, thereby permitting the adult to enjoy the same measure of realism on the screen as has always been found in literature and on the speaking stage, and permitting the screening of dramatic masterpieces without unwarranted expurgation of vital scenes.

6. To use voice, pen, vote and personal influence, so far as is possible, in resisting not only class legislation against the screen but also any legislation and propaganda seeking to impose upon any creative art or medium of expression—press, pulpit or public rostrum—censorship or hampering restrictions desired only by a minority.

7. To study and support the best in screen drama and to foster, in every possible way the development and elevation of the motion picture art.



H. H. VAN LOAN'S OWN CORNER

DURING a chat with House Peters the other day, that excellent actor remarked: "When the author, actor and director get together on the 'set' we're going to have better pictures."

I doubt whether his statement needs any qualifying whatsoever. That day is on the edge of the horizon now, and it won't be long before many authors will be directing their own stories. Charlie Logue is doing it. He's the chap that wrote "The Infidel"—Katherine MacDonald's latest picture—and adapted "My Four Years in Germany."

* * * * *

A YOUNG LADY said to me the other day: "If I could only sell one story, I'd throw up my position and devote the rest of my time to writing."

Hollywood and Los Angeles are filled with aspiring writers who have done that very same thing. Some people have done a thing once and never were able to do it again. It requires more than the sale of one story to prove to yourself that you can write. Then too, there are lots of people who have only one story in them, and book publishers, play producers and moving picture producers will vouch for the truth of this statement.

* * * * *

WHAT is hokum, anyway?" This is the question Edwin Schallert, Dramatic Editor of the Los Angeles Times, asked me the other day. I told him that; "Hokum consists of all the sure-fire situations, designed to stir the greatest emotions in the human breast, which have been recognized as excellent ingredients in every melodrama since the days in Eden. It's the stuff that you'll find in every successful novel, play or photoplay, and if you're looking for a concrete example, go and see how Griffith handled it in his screen version of "The Two Orphans."

He tears the blind Louise from her sister, Henriette, and then takes his time in bringing them together again. And, all the time he's doing it he's working on the emotions of his audience to such an extent that when he brings you to that scene where Henriette sees Louise from her balcony and yet is unable to reach

her, you are not occupying one-half of the seat you paid for when you entered. It's hard to equal that sort of suspense, and it's always sure-fire. But, it's nothing more or less than plain, every-day, dyed-in-the-wool, blown-in-the-bottle hokum. Griffith is a master of it. He knows the value of it. He knows how it sets the blood tingling and the excitement it arouses in the breast, and he knows that the public loves that sort of thing with all its heart and soul. Every "best seller" has it; every great play has it and every successful moving picture production has it. Put it into your story and you'll sell the story.

* * * * *

HITCH your ambition to a star, but don't hitch your story to one. This is the advice we give those who keep a particular star in mind as they write their story. If there is another character in the story which can be built up and made into a strong role, don't hesitate about doing it. The day is fast approaching when the majority of our productions will be composed of well-balanced casts, and each role will be interpreted by famous actors.

* * * * *

DRESS it up, if you so desire; put it in an aristocratic setting or make the background one of poverty; put it on an island in the Red Sea or in the barrens of the Klondike, but make it melodrama. That's what the public wants. Real red-blooded, suspense, thrilling, romantic drama, with smashing climaxes and flavored with mystery and intrigue. We like that sort of stuff because we're all youthful at heart, and youth loves action and excitement.

* * * * *

FOR the benefit of those who are of the opinion that nearly everyone in the world is writing, or is about to write, a photoplay, we might inform them that two of the most popular feminine stars are at present idle, because they are without suitable stories. They would pay almost any reasonable price for the right kind of stories, and yet, at the present writing they have not been able to find the particular type of story they think most acceptable to their peculiar ability. All of which leads us to wonder how many stars are capable of deciding the roles they are best in. We have watched a goodly number of them

fade into the background during the past two or three years, and the main reason for their waning popularity was due to the fact that they picked the roles they were least fitted to portray.

* * * * *

WHEN the novelist, playwright or photodramatist starts to write fiction he usually turns to facts for his material; when he writes facts, the public very often brands the results as fiction. Today we wonder just how much of everything is fiction and how much is fact. For example: I recently wrote my first sea story, entitled, "Wreckage." The other day a correspondent wrote me that he believed I had taken my material from facts. He said he knew of a "William McCabe" in real life, and that the legal part of the story was made public in a Los Angeles divorce court some time ago. This, in spite of the fact that I believed I was writing a fiction story, and never heard of a case of similar nature being enacted in real life. The story was original with me, and was inspired by having come into contact with the crews of various lightships throughout the world. I was rather pleased with the comment of the correspondent, for it assured me that my story must be human, and therefore not an impossible one. All of which goes to prove that a writer may honestly and sincerely try to be original, but it really can't be done. For, after all, life is stranger than fiction.

* * * * *

THE following communication was received recently from a modest young writer who illuminates a certain town in Illinois. In these days of egotism and vain-glorious boasting, it is pleasing to find one individual who refuses to become inflated with self-adoration, and I am going to reproduce it verbatim in the hopes that it will serve as a soothing cure to those afflicted with too much blatant, floundering, personal importance. So here it goes:

"Gentlemen.—I am enclosing herewith one of my great five reel feature photoplays entitled "The Flu Fighting Serenade" which I want you to please read over and then please buy it from me. I want to tell you that I want from between \$100,000 to \$500,000 for this great photoplay which I am sending to you. This is not very much money for a great five reel feature photoplay. This is all that I want for this great photoplay entitled "The Flu Fighting Serenade" is only from between

\$100,000 to \$500,000. It took me from between two and three weeks time to make up this photoplay and write it out. I never copy a word of it. I made it all up out of my own head. I bought myself a book on "How To Be-Come A Expert Moving Picture Photoplay Writer" and I studied it for two or three months time, then I learn how to write photoplays. Awaiting your early reply at once by return mail, or within five or six days from now.

"I remain,

"Yours Very Truly,

"John Blank.

"P. S. Please send check for between \$100,000 to \$500,000 to my name who is Mister Blank. Please write me a good letter, and then address the envelope with my name on it, then pin the check for from between \$100,000 to \$500,000 to the letter, and then sealed the envelope, and then have the envelope Registered. This is the best way and the only way.

"With Many Thanks.

"I am affective with my speech, and I can't talk very plain, and it certainly would help me out a great deal with my speech if you people will buy this great five reel feature photoplay from me for from between \$100,000 to \$500,000.

"My New Address is as followed.

"The Blank Moving Picture Writing Co.,

"Mister Blank Pres. & Gen. Mgr. & Writer.

"Executive Headquarters.

"Please used my old addresses."

From the foregoing, it is really unnecessary to state that the producer who received this remarkable communication did not purchase the story.

* * * * *

OCCASIONALLY, a writer blooms forth with the announcement that he is going to give patrons what they should have, instead of what they want. Such an author never worries anyone but himself. Ride along with the procession: stick with the crowd. The fellow that gets too far ahead of the drum-major is in danger of losing the parade entirely.

* * * * *

ACCORDING to the exhibitor, the public, although it has plainly manifested what it wants, doesn't know what it really does want. It wants a good story; that's what it wants. That's what it always wants. The producer and the director admit today that the story is paramount.





Little Hints for Screen Writers

The editor will be pleased, at all times, to discuss on this page any problem which readers of *The Photodramatist* may suggest to him

SITUATIONS grow out of conflict. The probabilities are that in many instances the scenario writer has difficulty in getting conflict into his story because the motives of the characters are not strong enough. Study the purposes and desires of the characters in a particular incident. If you were to increase their motives, they would be aroused to greater struggle in order to accomplish their respective purposes. Thus, by making the motivation more powerful—if done logically and convincingly—situations will naturally develop.

IN a recent interview, Oliver Morosco, the veteran producer, stated that no theme has greater appeal than that of self-sacrifice. Mr. Morosco is undoubtedly right. The screen writer who is casting about him for a solid foundation upon which to build a "sure-fire" photodrama cannot go wrong if he selects this powerful, elemental theme and bases his story thereon. The very words "self-sacrifice" suggest love, heroism, courage—humanness. Since the beginning of time, the progress of mankind has been marked by remarkable examples of sacrifice. They are recorded in history; and every one, although true, is a story, containing all the elements of true drama. Go to your library and read some of them. We venture to state that, when you are through, a new and powerful photoplay will already have found birth in your mind.

CAREFUL scenarists will bear in mind the fact that the "highlights"—the big moments of their screen stories—must not be neglected. Although attention to detail is an excellent thing, the writer must not allow his story to become so replete with comparatively trivial, unimportant incidents that the climactic portions thereof will lose power. Scenario editors are only

human, and they are busy men and women. Although always seeking for screen "gold," they cannot be expected to spend hours digging it from a mass of clay. Dig your own gold. Throw the clay to one side, leaving the precious story-metal exposed in such a manner that the busiest of busy men cannot help but find it.

THE tendency of film producers at the present time is to give more careful attention to subtitles than formerly. There is much interest now in making them of a literary standard that will equal the high quality of the production itself. Usually the subtitles are written by the continuity writer and later edited during the cutting of the picture, to suit the action of the particular scene. But it is a good idea for authors to give a great deal of attention to subtitles, and if they have some especially good ideas, to put them into their synopses. The ideal picture has the fewest possible subtitles, but these few should be of the highest literary quality.

IT will often be found that characters develop inconsistently with the situations arranged by the writer. In this case, neither characterization nor plot should be sacrificed. The difficulty is that the play has not been properly "screened" in the mind. Of course, the ability to do so is a high attainment. Character conception is largely intuition-al, but when it comes to writing you must apply some matter-of-fact tests. Consider your plot with an analysis of cause and effect. Likewise, consider whether you have a "convenient" character or one that is realistic. If you have visualized your story scene by scene, concentration together with this visualization will help you to straighten out the difficulties. Remember that it takes time to write a photoplay.

From Pen to Silversheet

By Melvin M. Riddle

VII—SCREEN MAKE-UP

MAKE-UP, or the art of making up for the screen, while it cannot be defined as one of the branches of film production, is nevertheless one of the incidental arts, vital and necessary to the making of motion pictures and is thus, one of the major steps that must be taken in our journey from pen to silversheet.

Many are perhaps of the impression that make-up is a very simple art and involves merely the application of a little grease-paint on the face of the actor or actress. On the other hand, it is a very intricate art and one which requires much patience, study and practice before it can be successfully and thoroughly mastered.

A well-known screen character actor has observed that the art of making up should be divided into three separate and distinct branches. These are facial make-up, physical make-up and mental make-up. Of course, the make-up of the leading man, juvenile, leading woman or ingenue is the simplest kind and is generally known as a straight make-up. It consists merely in putting on a ground tone of grease paint, lining the eyes

and eyebrows, beading the eye-lashes and toning up the lips with a little rouge. But the character artist or the man or woman who makes up his or her face to portray various kinds of characters or personalities, must be a genuine artist, inasmuch as by the aid of make-up he must often change his entire physiognomy and personality to suit the role for which he has been cast.

The essential foundation for all facial make-up is the grease paint. This is first applied evenly over the face and this first application is known as the ground tone. If this tone becomes spotted or marred, it cannot be patched up, but must be completely

removed and a new coat applied. If the subject has a pink or ruddy complexion, pink grease paint is used, and if the complexion is brunette or sallow, a yellow tone is applied. This is because the make-up must harmonize with the complexion because if a contrasting color is used, the camera will register spots on the complexion where the make-up is thin and the skin shows through.

The basic principle of character facial make-up is the principle of high lights and low lights. Certain colors, such as red, brown, black, dark grey, orange, purple, etc., register photographically as shadows and thus when applied in the proper manner can be used to accentuate wrinkles, make

sunken cheeks or other like effects. These colors, when applied, are known as "low lights." It has often been asked why screen actors, unlike those on the legitimate stage, use no rouge on their cheeks in their make-up. This is because the rouge would photograph dark and register as a shadow, making the handsome leading man or pretty ingenue look thin and emaciated in the face.

The opposite effect to the low light is the

high light. Any light color, such as white, light grey, light blue, etc., is a high light and is used for a purpose directly opposite from that for which the low light is used. The high light color, photographically, produces a convex or outstanding effect. A low light is generally edged with a high light color to further accentuate the low light, and vice versa. This important principle is applied in making up wrinkles, sunken cheeks, lines, scars, sagging skin, overhanging eyebrows, sunken eye sockets, etc. The wrinkle is made by a line of low light color, edged on one side with a faint line of high light. The red low light is of inestimable value to the actress who as the

Grease-Paint is Not All

that enters into the "make-up of a conscientious screen actor. The mind, as well as the face, must be moulded into conformity with the part to be played. Mr. Riddle, in his interesting way, tells you, in this article, just how this is accomplished. There'll be another installment of this fascinating series in the bigger and better July Photodramatist

years go by develops the fatal double chin. The red streak of rouge throws the invisible mantle over this drawback to screen beauty.

The made-up scar is produced in a way directly opposite from the method used in making up a wrinkle. The scar is a high light color, lined or set off with a low light color. For freckles, little daubs of brown grease paint are used. An important point to be remembered is that make-up is chiefly an accentuating agent. When the character actor makes up wrinkles or other facial lines, he should first assume the expression of the character and then accentuate lines natural to that expression and should never make wrinkles or lines where they do not naturally occur. The good make-up artist must also be familiar with the many varieties of wigs, beards, moustaches, false teeth, etc., and must know for which kind of character type each is best fitted. There are also many artificial effects in make-up such as the pulling of certain muscles by attaching strings to the muscle by the use of putty and then tying the strings and pulling the muscles until the desired effect is obtained. This method is often used in the Chinese make-up, when the eyes are pulled back at the corners, making them resemble the eyes of a Chinaman. Putty is also employed in making enlarged or crooked character noses.

After completing his facial make-up, the character artist must look to what we have already termed his physical make-up. He must be sure that his wardrobe is right, for his wardrobe, after all, is a part of his make-up. If he is playing a tramp, he must be sure his clothes look old and ragged and if they are in too good a state of preservation, he must take a file and make a few frayed spots or ragged edges in the material. He might also use a little soap or Fuller's earth to give the proper effects. Physical make-up, however, also includes the assumption by the actor and the physical expression of all the proper mannerisms and physical conditions characteristic of the role he is portraying. If the character is awkward in his movements, the actor must also remember to be awkward in every scene in which he appears before the camera. If the character has a wooden leg or a wooden hand, the actor must make up his hand or his limb so that such an impression is conveyed to the audience. In a Paramount Picture starring Wallace Reid, entitled, "The Love Special," Clarence Burton, well-known character artist, performed a per-

fect feat of make-up art by making his own perfectly good hand look exactly like an artificial hand. Many pictures have been seen in which the actors have been photographed in various difficult physical make-ups and one, in particular, will be remembered by many, in which the character player was made up so that he most strikingly resembled a huge ape. In some of these most difficult make-ups the services of a professional make-up expert are required.

By mental make-up is meant the mental state of the actor when playing a character part. It can easily be seen how it is most necessary that the actor strive to be, in thought, as well as physically, as nearly like the character he portrays as possible. This makes for sincerity and promotes a more faithful interpretation of the role. The correct mental attitude is a keynote to a perfect character portrayal. It has been said that a person's face and physique are only an outward expression of his mentality. Therefore, if the actor keeps the right mental attitude during his work, the other will conform. If, for instance, he doesn't lose sight, for a moment, of the fact that for the time being, he is an awkward, ungainly, bowlegged cowpuncher, his physical actions will more readily respond to this condition of thought. Or, if he will keep in mind continually that he is impersonating a county judge or a military officer, the natural dignity characteristic of such characters will be reflected in his every physical move and expression. This will apply to any kind of characterization he may interpret.

Lucien Littlefield, one of the best known stock character actors at the Lasky studio said recently:

"I never fail to carefully observe any odd or striking character whom I chance to see on the street or outside my studio work," he explains. "I have a mental list of characters upon which I draw when in need of inspiration for some role. When I see an unusual character, I watch his actions, engage him in conversation if possible, observe his mannerisms, his outstanding features and even, through conversation get a hint of his character, temperament or philosophy, if possible. When I can think of no model to fit an important character role, I have often gone down on the streets and kept my eyes open until one has come under my observation. Then I make him my model, for my make-up, mentally, as well as facially and physically."

The Guild Forum

A monthly department devoted to the interests of the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America, the official organization of recognized photodramatists and studio staff writers.

The Screen Writers' Guild

OFFICERS

Frank E. Woods, President.
Marion Fairfax, Vice-President.
Elmer Harris, Treasurer and Executive Secretary.
Lucien Hubbard, Recording Secretary.

Executive Committee

The officers and Thompson Buchanan,
Waldemar Young, Eugene W. Presbrey,
Jeanie MacPherson, Mary O'Connor,
Milton Schwartz, Al Cohn.

THOREAU CRONYN, special correspondent for the New York Herald, who was sent to Hollywood following the Taylor murder, pays a pleasing tribute to the Screen Writers' Guild in one of the articles which he has written for his paper since his return from New York. Among other things he states:

"Then there is the Screen Writers' Guild. It is a distinctly cheering institution. Before going to Hollywood I had never heard of it except through a newspaper announcement that it had offered a reward of \$1,000 for the capture and conviction of the Taylor murderer.

"That's the crowd that gave the big dinner a while ago, the Writers' Cramp, an outlander told me. So it is, and much more. It is a flourishing alliance of the men and women of a new profession—the writers of stories and scenarios for the motion pictures. It is an offspring of the Authors' League of America, born two years ago at a meeting in the home of Thompson Buchanan, whom theatre-goers remember for "A Woman's Way" and other plays of the legitimate stage.

"It strives to get adequate recognition for the screen writer, to co-operate with the Authors' League in improving copyright laws, to make sounder the contracts of writers and producers and to ply visiting celebrities with food and moral entertainment. It has in Hollywood a \$20,000 clubhouse, for which it is paying by the month, without missing an installment thus far. It dispelled forever the impression that writers are poor business men by making a profit of \$6,647.54 from its first annual dinner, the Writers'

Cramp, held in December in the Ambassador Hotel.

"It has succeeded in settling out of court disputes between producers and writers, so that now its services as arbiter are sought even by the "magnates." And when the scandals threatened Hollywood the Screen Writers' Guild leaped to the defense."

Writers Lose Friend

Members of the guild were greatly shocked to learn of the sudden death of Maxwell Karger, formerly Production Manager for the Metro Pictures Corporation and one of the best friends that members of the writing fraternity had in the screen world. His demise occurred while en route to New York for a conference with the directors of the Metro corporation. Funeral services were held at the Church of the Blessed Sacrament, Hollywood, on Thursday May 11th.

June Mathis, noted scenarist who worked with Mr. Karger for many years has offered the following appreciation which is echoed by every member of the Guild:

"Honorable in business and friendship—his word was his bond. In my six years' association with him, I never knew him to do a mean, underhanded action. He shouldered the burden of many others and if in the stress of this nerve-racking business which we all know so well, he at times was cross, irritable or excitable to one of his employees he was ever ready to express his regret and hold out his hand to help them in time of need—returning good for evil. An untiring worker, a genius—a personality that one cannot forget—vibrating the vitality that makes one realize that though lost to the world, it cannot die!
"June Mathis."

Refute Propagandists

In pursuance of the campaign inaugurated by the Guild to combat the malicious, untrue propaganda against Hollywood, so widely circulated in the Eastern states, a number of its members recently contributed articles in magazines covering the truth regarding this beautiful suburb of Los Angeles and the motion picture profession. Among the best of these articles was one written by George Ade, the noted humor-

ist, which recently appeared in the American Magazine. The enormous circulation which this answer to the "reformers" has received through that publication is expected to exert tremendous influence toward enlightening the public as to the type of community that Hollywood really is.

Elect Officers

At the annual meeting of the stockholders in the Holding Company, owners of the club house which is the home of the Screen Writers' Guild of the Authors' League of America and the Writers' Club, the following officers were elected:

President, Thompson Buchanan; Vice-President, Mary H. O'Connor; Secretary and Treasurer, J. E. Harris; Acting secretary and treasurer, J. E. Nash.

The following Board of Directors was elected: Frank E. Woods, Thompson Buchanan, Marion Fairfax, Richard Willis, June Mathis and Mary H. O'Connor.

It has been expected that action would be taken on the matter of improvements which are to be made on the club property. Two sets of plans were submitted but no definite choice was made. It is tentatively understood, however, that the dining room will be enlarged, a billiard room will be added and the athletic field will be equipped with tennis courts, showers and perhaps a swimming pool.

The club has become a popular gathering place for celebrities, and a roll call at any of the noonday luncheons would reveal a long list of names famous on the screen, on the stage and in literature. As a result of the popularity of the dining room, it seems to be essential that some definite agreement be arrived at and improvements be started as soon as possible.

Gilson Willetts, veteran screen writer and at present editorial head for Pathe is exceedingly ill at the Clara Barton Hospital in Los Angeles. An operation for stomach trouble was recently performed and Mr.

Willetts' condition has been serious ever since.

Guild Activities

Albert Shelby LeVino, accompanied by his wife and child, have left Hollywood to spend several months in New York. Mr. LeVino will be busily occupied at the eastern studio of the Famous Players-Lasky organization during his eastern "vacation."

Clayton Hamilton, who has been busy at the Goldwyn studios, in Culver City, California for many months is about to start on a trip to Honolulu which will be followed by a tour of the South of this country. Mr. Hamilton will return to his studio work sometime in August.

Miss Jeanie MacPherson has been working day and night on the Cecil B. DeMille feature "Manslaughter" which is nearing completion. Miss MacPherson wrote the manuscript and has been in close conference with Mr. deMille throughout the production activities.

Charles Kenyon, well-known scenarist who has been with the Goldwyn company for many months, has resigned to accept a position with the Universal Film Corporation. We understand that Mr. Kenyon, under his new arrangement, is to have charge of two production units.

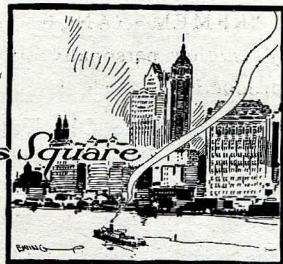
"Main Street," Sinclair Lewis' famous novel, is being adapted for film production by Agnes Johnston and Frank Dazey who, by the way, have a long string of successes to their credit. Mr. and Mrs. Dazey (which is the name of this writing team in private life) also report the sale of two originals to the Ambassador Film Corporation. The latter will be directed by Louis Gasnier and released through First National.





Gossip Street

From Hollywood Boulevard to Times Square



SADA COWAN is the first American writer to work in Europe with foreign directors. Miss Cowan is now writing an original story, based on historical episodes, for Dimitri Buchowayski, the well known Russian director.

ARTHUR S. KANE recently signed a contract with Edward A. McManus for four features for Associated Exhibitors. McManus, Charles A. Logue, May Allison, Robert Ellis, a complete cast and a full complement of cameramen are enroute for Porto Rico where the four pictures will be made. The first story is from the pen of Chas. A. Logue.

FILMING OF "Under Oath," the first Elaine Hammerstein production to be made on the West Coast, has been started by Selznick. George Archainbaud is directing. Edward J. Montague wrote both the story and scenario.

PARAMOUNT will soon begin production of "The Impossible Mrs. Bellew," starring Gloria Swanson. The story is being adapted by Elmer Harris and Percy Heath.

WILLIAM DUNCAN is co-starring with Edith Johnson in a screen drama of the north woods, the continuity of which was prepared by Bradley J. Smollen.

STUART PATON will direct Marie Prevost in Bernard Hyman's original story, "They're Off!"

"HUSH MONEY" is the first original story written by the popular author, Samuel Merwin, directly for the screen. Alice Brady will portray the leading role.

COLLEEN MOORE will play the leading feminine role in "Broken Chains," the \$10,000 prize scenario by Winifred Kimball

A GREAT collection of types—native women of the South Sea Islands, beach-combers and the off-scourings of the seven seas—appear in a very interesting episode of "The Bonded Woman," which was written for Betty Compson by Albert Shelby LeVino.

JACK HOLT is still on location for "The Man Unconquerable," his new Paramount picture directed by Joseph Henabery and adapted by Julien Josephson from the original by Hamilton Smith.

GOLDWYN wants to know what has happened to all the amateur scenario writers, as, since the close of the Chicago News-Goldwyn scenario contest there has been a great scarcity of contributions.

"KENTUCKY DAYS," a special Fox production, boasts fifteen leading characters. The photoplay was written by Paul H. Sloane.

GEORGE WASHINGTON OGDEN'S "The Bond Boy" is being adapted to the screen as a starring vehicle for Richard Barthelmess.

VITAGRAPH has loaned Patsy Ruth Miller to Goldwyn as leading woman for Earl Williams in the picturization of a story by O. Henry.

ALBERT SHELBY LEVINO is leaving for New York shortly to write two pictures for Alice Brady, whom Joe Heneberry will direct.

GEORGE HIVELEY has just finished the script on "Come Through" for Herbert Rawlinson.

ELLIOTT CLAWSON is working upon the scenario of "Trimmed in Scarlet," for Priscilla Dean.

"NEVER MIND TOMORROW," Marie Prevost's next picture for Lasky, was written by Bernard Hyman.

HARVEY GATES is writing a series of two-reel pictures for Tom Santschi.

CLARA BERANGER, scenarist for William C. deMille, is due back from New York within a week.

HECTOR TURNBULL, widely-known author, has gone into scenario writing.

CLAYTON HAMILTON, whose writing contract with Goldwyn expires next month, will go to Honolulu this summer.

"REMEMBRANCE" is the tentative title of another personally directed Rupert Hughes production, which is said to be of the same genre as "The Old Nest."

William Fox has purchased the motion picture rights to "The Shadow of the East," by E. M. Hull, the English novelist, before the novel has been published in this country. E. M. Hull is the author of "The Sheik."

FOR ONCE the movies have got ahead of the magazines in the publication of a story. Clarence Budington Kellard's "Across the Deadline," written for Frank Mayo as an original story, is shortly to be published in a national magazine.

IT IS NOTHING new when a producer adapts a stage play for screen purposes, but a reverse of procedure should prove interesting. There is insistent talk that C. Gardner Sullivan's original screen play, "Hail the Woman," is to be considered seriously as a stage production next season.

A COUNTRY-WIDE canvass by the Goldwyn Scenario Department shows that public taste is swinging toward society dramas. Consequently, the company is in the market for a series of stories depicting life among the well-to-do. The announcement says these stories must have big, human themes.

SOMEONE has been poring over the "best American photoplays of 1921" selected by various critics and finds that they agree on the following: Charles Ray's "Scrap Iron," Chaplin's "The Kid," "A Connecticut Yankee," "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse," "The Three Musketeers," "Little Lord Fauntleroy," "Disraeli," and "Sentimental Tommy."

BUSTER KEATON has completed a film without an ingenue.

WILLIAM LE BARON has been advanced from scenario editor to director-general of production for Cosmopolitan Production, and Verne H. Porter, editor of Cosmopolitan magazine since 1918, has been appointed scenario editor. Howard Irving Young has been named film editor.

Richard Butler Glaenzer, poet, short story writer, and critic, is the latest literary celebrity to hear the call of the movies. Mr. Glaenzer has been added to the Goldwyn scenario department.

JULIAN JOHNSON, former editor of Photoplay Magazine, has been created manager of the editorial department of the Famous Players Lasky Corporation.

CHARLES LOGUE is a busy man these days. He recently sold the following stories which are now under production or will be shortly: "Gay and Devilish," and "Breaking Into the Movies," both starring Doris May; "Friday to Monday," and "The Heart Dealer," featuring Katherine MacDonald. Mr. Logue also wrote "The Infidel" for Miss MacDonald.

LOUIS STEVENS has just had the good fortune, even in these hard times, to sell three all at one "pop." One of them is called "The Woman Breed," and is to serve as a vehicle for no less famous a star than Pauline Frederick. The others have been purchased by Victor L. Schertzinger. They are, "Dollar Devils," and "The Kingdom of the Blind."


MRS. LILLIAN Trimble Bradley has joined the Lasky scenario staff. Mrs. Bradley is the author of such successful stage plays as "The Wonderful Thing," and "Mr. Mid's Mystery" and co-author of "The Moon on the Index." She has been for four years stage director of such George Broadhurst productions as "The Crimson Alibi" and "The Storm." Mrs. Bradley is now at the Lasky studio to study photoplay construction and technique.



TENNYSON said, "The babbling brook goes on forever." But don't let your photoplay be a brook.




SUDDEN SUCCESS is the worst enemy of the aspiring photoplaywright.



Comment from Student Writers

A Department to which Students are invited to Contribute



"MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS"

By Erwin Pledger

It seems to me that if people would mind their own business, there would be no blue-laws, no censorship.

I refuse to believe that such people are actuated by altruistic feelings or charitable motives; rather am I convinced that all their activities originate, first, from jealousy and, second, from a desire to rule, or interfere. Inter-mixed with these is a desire to hold positions, draw salaries, do something and be IT.

The normal man or woman cares not a whit what another takes into his asenobagus, what kind of pictures he sees, or whether or not he indulges in pet vices, or witnesses prize-fights, because, in plain language, it is none of his business.

These busybodies set up for themselves rules of conduct tending to asceticism and abstinence, and most of them do this, probably, because of the necessity of combatting an abnormal desire for indulgence in worldly pleasures; or, if the desire does not exist, because of a mental bias giving undue valuation to such things.

It is their right for them to make such rules for themselves, but have they any right to make rules for me? And why do they try to do this?

Jealousy is the answer. They go about and see others enjoying things which they themselves may not enjoy because of their own self-inflicted restrictions, or, more likely, because of mental ineptitude or physical incapacity, whether due to age or natural wear and tear.

Whereupon, they immediately become Dogs-in-the-Manger—they wish to keep others from eating the fruit they may not eat. Surely, this is jealousy underscored and upper-cased.

The blue-law people have been, and will be still further successful because they are active and militant, while their victims, the great "lollypop" public, are inactive and non-resistant.

"PADDING" IN THE PHOTOPLAY

By Phillip Double

When, years ago, Herbert Spencer enunciated his interest-compelling principle of the Economy of Attention, he gave to the world of varied arts a law that was to afford latter-day producers of a new and now flourishing art supreme pleasure in its flagrant violation.

This principle applied to projected images through the medium of the written word; but it can as well apply to the medium of the screen story, since primarily the latter's appeal is to a public assembled in a theatre, its mental faculties fully receptive of the images or impression to be conveyed to their mind's eye by the screen.

It has always been a great mystery to me

why a long-suffering public tamely submits to having thrust before its palpitating eye endless footage of superfluous screen material painfully dragged in to cover obvious gaps between the culminating scenes. The explanation, of course, after some study of the situation, would seem to be that the act of padding is nothing more than the forced fattening of thin, anaemic arguments to pictures expanded into watery six or more reels of doubtful consistency, the better to afford a grasping producer of lame artistic conscience with a pretext for collecting returns on excessive footage.

I am one of Lincoln's many who permits himself to be "fooled some of the time." But my plaint is not, in this instance, from the point of view of the layman, but more from the viewpoint of the writer who seriously sits himself down to write a compact plot developed within definite bounds, only to have his brain-child's climactic points diluted beyond recognition by needlessly injected inanities whose only function is presumably to rouse lagging interest, an interest that cannot help being dispersed by the disruption of the organic compactness of the original argumental structure.

A wilful distension of the plot must inevitably produce a consequent weakening of the entire fabric of the author's conception. A chain is no stronger than its weakest link. I draw from this truism the conclusion that the full appeal of a finished art product can be no stronger than the partial interest aroused by its weakest feature; therefore, when there is a deliberate effort made to enlarge on the fabric of a composition that has its scope already limited by its creator, there can be only one result, and that is the weakening of the original strands of interest by vicious stretching.

TOO MUCH HASTE

By George May Randolph

As most of you have, I answered the call of that strange little something deep within, which suggested to me that I possessed creative imagination. I gathered about my desk a perfect library of delightfully Universityish looking books and went to work. First I read and read, then I thought and thought, and in a short time I began to write and write, rewrite and then write again, pausing only long enough to sleep some, eat a little, before again taking up my precious books and chewed-up lead pencil.

I became desperate after working two long weeks on two heavy Dramas, which I judged to be of two reel strength. I slammed a heavy French-English dictionary upon both of them, and seizing a passing idea, sketched it that afternoon, hastily revised it the next day, and bored my husband's stenographer to tears in the typing of it. (I must state that my touch system on the typewriter is of slow progression). For two weeks I celebrated by resting,

(Continued on Page 36)



Photoplays in Review

by the Staff



THE NIGHT ROSE

Reviewed by Elizabeth Niles.

Comment: This story is exceptional in that Leroy Scott wrote it with Lon Chaney in mind as the star, but playing the role of the antagonist. Since but few stars care for such a part, this type of play is seldom seen. With a background of underworld plotting and political intrigue, the story is exceedingly melodramatic, but fortunately avoids most of the hackneyed situations usually found in this sort of story. The action is tense and at times suspenseful, but has not the gripping power of human touch of the similar picture of "The Penalty" with which it is certain to be compared. The characterization is a little above the average in all the roles except that of Red O'Rourke; which is an exceptional portrayal of a suave and well poised plotter who is cunning enough to conform to the conventionals for safety's sake. The least in character is the mother who is not shown to be so straight-laced until her daughter offends. The dramatic triad is well sustained throughout, with a highly commendable complicating force in Red's former sweetheart Sally. For a hero Jimmy has but little to do; but the story was not written for him. The climax is altogether satisfactory since Sally prevents the heroine becoming a murderess. Though criticised in some states by the censors, there appears little cause for this, since but little of the underworld life is made attractive and justice is meted out according to law.

Synopsis: At one table at a Barbary Coast cafe sits Georgia Rodman and her rather unsophisticated escort Jimmy; at another is Red O'Rourke who is impressed with Georgia's innocence. A gangster, fleeing from the police, enters and at Red's suggestion seats himself at Jimmy's table. When the police come, he shoots one of them and escapes, but Jimmy is held. Red bails Jimmy out and offers to protect him from District Attorney Graham; he also gives a home to Georgia when she is not believed by her mother. This arouses the jealousy of Red's Sally. Meanwhile the police and Graham are out to get Red. Learning he is closely beset, Red plans the killing of Graham and Jimmy the night of his big ball. Angered by Sally's jealousy he tells her his plans for Jimmy. Just as Sally tries to warn Jimmy and Georgia, Red's man shoots Jimmy. For revenge Georgia goes to the ball and, in pausing in a dance with Red, denounces him and pulls a pistol. Sally, still jealous, seizes the pistol and claims the right to shoot Red herself. Graham recognizes Georgia and takes her home to her repentant mother and the recuperating Jimmy.

ORPHANS OF THE STORM

Reviewed by Elizabeth Niles.

Comment: First of all this is a spectacle, but also it pictures a very human story; it has great warmth, feeling, and depth and it plays on the heartstrings of the spectators. In places the appeal is over-emphasized, as in the fierce intensity of the carnage while in some of the battle and mob scenes, the people appear to be merely milling around. In an effort to arouse suspense before the capture of de Vaudrey, a half dozen soldiers dash madly about falling over one another in a small entry hall and running up a few steps and then down again for a prodigiously long time before they finally do the logical thing of ascending the stairs and trying each door on the floor above. Aside from a few extravagances of this sort, it is a magnificent picture both as a beautiful vision and as a gory horror. Since the story is an old one taken from the famous play the *Two Orphans*, it has a number of situations which in modern settings would be considered hackneyed; against their proper background, however, they hold the spectator entranced from the moment of the kidnapping of one of the orphans through the race with the pardon just as the great knife of the guillotine is about to fall. The characterization is admirably consistent throughout; especially pleasing is the impetuous love-making of the young aristocrat and the swift changes of mood of Henriette from the playful child to the motherly protectress of anyone in distress. Historically there is an occasional slip, but more such pictures would tend to increase the popular taste for knowledge of world history.

Synopsis: Henriette Girard and her blind foster-sister Louise, left as orphans through a plague, are on their way to consult an eye-specialist when a ruse is struck with Henriette's beauty. He has her kidnapped, leaving Louise helpless, and carried to a magnificent fete. When her struggles with the nobleman are recognized as genuine, a young aristocrat, de Vaudrey, effects her escape, secures her lodgings, and assists her search for Louise. Meanwhile Louise has been befriended by Pierre, a grinder, but his mother forces her to sing and beg for her. Stirred by the speeches of Danton, the feeling between the people and the aristocrats has become so strong that Danton is forced to seek a hiding place. When he dashes into Henriette's lodgings she binds up his wound and protects him at risk to herself. Because of de Vaudrey's refusal to marry anyone but Henriette, he is exiled, but his aunt goes to see Henriette and hears her story of her search for Louise. From a locket, she recognizes Louise as her daughter, just when Henriette hears Louise singing in the street. Before she can reach her sister, however,

the police arrive and peremptorily drag Henriette off to the Bastille. She is freed when the people drive out the aristocrats and take possession of the city. De Vaudrey, escaped from his prison, returns to the city as a commoner, but is recognized and, with Henriette, who tried to protect him, is arrested and tried. At the trial Henriette finds Louise, only to be separated when she and de Vaudrey are carted to the guillotine. When Danton recognizes these last victims, he makes such a strong plea for moderation and mercy that the people rise against the court and demand their pardon. By dint of a hard race Danton arrives just after Pierre has stayed the execution a few moments by stabbing the man about to let the knife fall. A few years later the four young people are made supremely happy by a successful operation on Louise's eyes.

TRAVELIN' ON

Reviewed by Laura Jansen.

Comment: A Bill Hart picture, written by himself. There is quite some suspense and drama but one very unconvincing bit. Hi Morton, the parson wants to build a church to convert the lawless people of Tumble Bluff, but he holds up the stage to get money to finish his church. It would have been more effective to have J. B. steal the money and accuse the parson, later saving him. On the whole it is rather a machine-made picture and not as good as some of Hart's earlier ones.

Synopsis: "J. B.," a wanderer, a man who takes always what he wants, wanders into the mining town of Tumble Bluff almost on the heels of Hi Morton, a traveling parson and his wife. Dandy Dan McGee has been attracted at once by Susan Morton. He is the ruling power in the small town.

Hi decides to build a church and always comes up against McGee. J. B. attracted by Susan decides to stay in town and protects her from one of McGee's men, when she sells Bibles to the gamblers. She sells one to J. B. but he cannot read it. He tells her he does not believe in God.

Mary Jane, Susan's child makes friends with J. B. and teaches him to read. She loves the monkey J. B. rescued from McGee's hands when he wanted to kill it. This monkey belonged to one of his girls and he resented the fact that he resembled it too closely.

Finding it impossible to complete his church and seeing a box with gold belonging to McGee taken on the stage, Hi holds it up during a rain storm, while J. B. hunts up the lost monkey. McGee has offered Susan to help her husband if she gives herself to him. She is rescued from his arms by J. B. but is staggered to find that he wanted to abduct her. J. B., however, experiences a change of heart.

Coming home with the monkey, J. B. finds his horse wet and tired. Hi used it. He sees

the men come and arrest Hi. Susan comes to him and begs him to save her husband, offering herself to him in exchange. J. B. seeing the noble character of Susan, for her sake, goes to the saloon and arrives in time to save Hi and clear him from the charge, saying he stole the gold. He kills McGee as he leaves and goes travelin' on. The last picture shows him riding in a field of cactus, consulting first Mary Jane's primer, then the Bible. Hi finishes his church and devotes his life to reforming the wild people of Tumble Bluff.

SMILIN' THROUGH

Reviewed by Elizabeth Niles.

Comment: Though built with an extremely simple plot, the story has a big theme and an intense heart appeal. Taken from a play presented some years ago, it made some of this appeal through the departure and arrival of the soldiers, but the love interest is universal and the idea of the influence of departed souls always possesses more or less popularity. The idea that Monyeen is trying to return to John Carteret, but is prevented by his retaining his hatred for Jeremiah is gotten over most effectively. The subject is treated very simply in the picture; even the death of Monyeen is made beautiful rather than terrifying. In its plot the story is impressionistic, though the antagonism of the uncle and the young lover is intensely felt and the gentle determination of Kathleen wins the loyal sympathy of the spectators. The shooting in the earlier scenes would be melodramatic were it not presented against a background of high ideals and fragile romance. More stories of this high order would certainly be appreciated by those seeking better films.

Synopsis: At the wedding of Monyeen and John Carteret, her rejected suitor, Jeremiah Wayne, shoots at John but kills Monyeen who runs between the men to protect her lover. John nurses his hatred of the name of Wayne long years afterward. Meanwhile, when Monyeen's sister dies, she leaves her little girl Kathleen to the care of Carteret. At a dance she meets Kenneth Wayne, a nephew of Jeremiah's, and despite her uncle's protests meets him again and falls in love with him. When war is declared he comes to say good-bye, but her uncle orders him away. To lessen Kathleen's anger against himself Carteret tells her of his great sorrow. Four years later when the soldiers come back, Kenneth returns wounded; he goes to Carteret to tell him he wont ask for Kathleen now that he is crippled. He meets her in the garden and lets her think that he cares for someone else. When he has gone she upbraids her uncle for having separated them even as Jeremiah had taken Monyeen from him. In repentance he sends for Kenneth and all ends happily.

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QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Concerning the Writing of Photoplays

Q. How do I prepare a brief synopsis to attach to the finished story? D. G.

A. I suggest that after the story is finished and ready for submission, you read it carefully, then write a *resume* of it, touching the high points of interest and connecting them with the thread of the story. Make it as brief as possible, but include sufficient material to give a complete idea of the finished product.

Q. What is meant by a situation of "convenience?" A. G.

A. It means the elimination or transposing of characters or interest simply to obtain the desired effect. For instance, Mary and John are unhappily married. Mary is in love with Tom. John is killed in an automobile accident, and *now* Mary and Tom may be married. Is this clearly defined?

Q. Have been told that my story was not submitted in the proper form. Will you kindly tell me what the proper form is? H. P.

A. A story should be typewritten, on a good quality of paper, 8½x14 or 8½x11. It should be double spaced, and bound at the top. Place a title page as the first sheet, a cast sheet next, followed by the brief synopsis, then the story itself.

Q. A story of mine has been rejected with the criticism that it lacks theme. What is really meant as theme? D. M.

A. By theme we mean the underlying current of the story. For instance, we will cite you to "The Old Nest," the theme of this is "Mother Love." By viewing this story you will gain a better idea than from pages of written explanation.

Q.—Is it advisable to employ spoken titles in writing my synopsis.—L. C.

A.—If a good spoken title will help you "put over" a particular scene more clearly than you could otherwise do, then use it; but the great thing to remember is the old proverb and do not fall into the trap—"Given an inch, take an ell." Do not let the title idea carry you away until you are writing dialogue or until you are getting deep into the realms of the continuity writer. In comedy drama a few good titles are often a great help to the scenes and also help the characterization.

Q.—Why am I told that retrospect action is best avoided. I have a story under way and it is necessary in the climax to tell the entire early life of the hero's father and I cannot put this in the form of a prologue or the mystery around which my story revolves will be 'given away'?—D. B.

A.—Retrospect should never be used if it can be avoided. It has a tendency to break up the smooth running of the picture and is more or less distracting to the audience. The idea is this: You have keyed up the audience and then disappoint it by breaking the tempo.

Q.—I sometimes see pictures which do not seem to conform to the rules of dramatic construction as set forth in the text books; for instance Rudyard Kipling's, "Without Benefit of Clergy." In this there was no conflict and no dramatic triad and it seems to be entirely "narrative" in form. Now when I write narrative stories for the screen they are turned down and I am told to stick to drama; why is this? F. R. K.

A.—It is true that "narrative" pictures are occasionally seen on the screen but the percentage of these is very small compared with the dramatic type of picture. This means that the amateur has far less chance of putting one over than he has with a dramatic work. The narrative picture is nearly altogether dependent on the remarkable characterization and the fine acting brought out by the director. It will be noticed that nearly all these stories are from the pens of the masters of fiction. The amateur cannot paint the same picture and make his characters live like the well known author, his narrative stories are too colorless, and the characters are cold and unconvincing.

Q. I have written a dozen or more stories which to my mind are just as good as most of the pictures which I have witnessed lately. What is the trouble? Why can't I sell them? O. P.

A. Producers are not seeking material as good as one sees, but something better. Nearly every studio has plenty of staff writers who can reel off by the yard plays as good as the average, and it is to the original writer that the producers are now looking to supply the greater demand for something a great deal better.

Q. Is it necessary for a story to be written in a perfect *technical* form in order to sell it? D. F.

A. Very few pictures can boast perfect technique. But, if you will look closely in witnessing photodramas upon the screen, you will generally find that the successful picture possesses certain outstanding qualities that "put it over."

Q. I have a splendid story written around a criminal court. Would it be censorable? R. A.

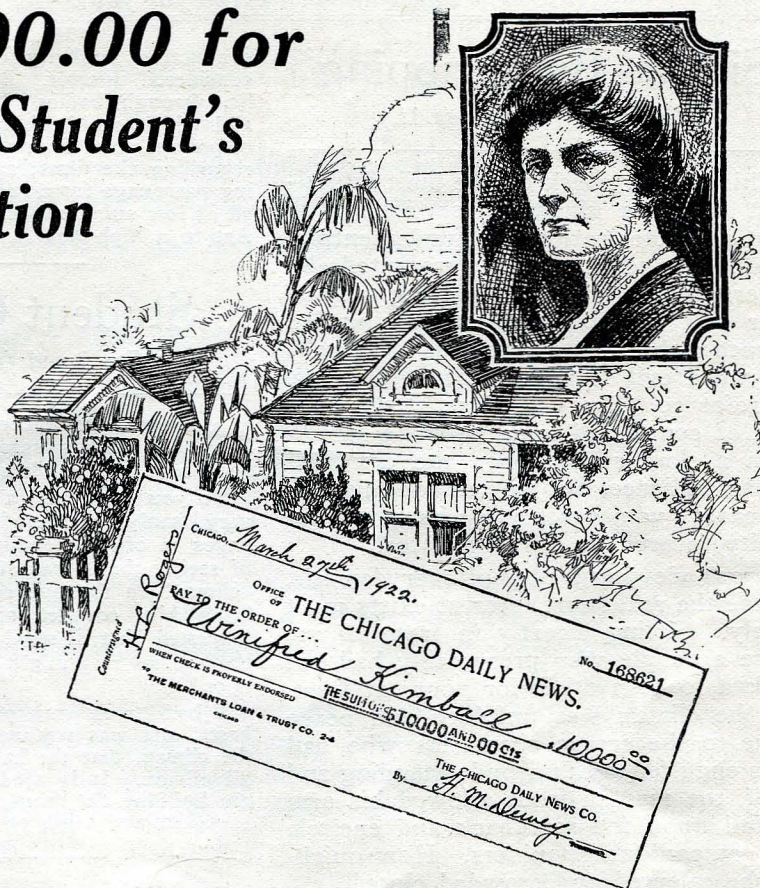
A. A story written around a criminal court would not be censorable so long as you show due respect for the law in the action and situations. Any subject is censorable which attacks the offices of the law, or has a disrespectful tendency toward law and order.

Q. Are disguises permissible in screen stories—this is, are they attractive to the producer? I. I.

A. The motif of disguise has been used to excess on the screen and is often not thoroughly convincing, so be careful in dealing with this rather questionable element.

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"Simple But Gripping"

(Continued from Page 11)

This appeal, which can be built into almost countless situations or applied to any characterization, is fundamentally misunderstanding being supplanted by understanding or the conquering of good over evil, the latter sometimes handled in such a delicate manner as to make the word evil seem a misfit. Allow me to refer to "The Old Nest." We cannot, of course, all hope to write stories with a similar grip upon the emotions of the audience, but we can continue the endeavor; who can say we have not the ability to produce fair duplicates.

I was viewing a play of everyday life, where the real heart interest exists most freely. Sitting directly in front of me were a couple who presumably had not spoken to each other for hours at least. As the climax was unfolded and peace came to the screen characters who had been engulfed with misunderstanding and grief, the man in front allowed his arm to fall upon the seat back and encircle his companion's shoulders. How quickly she relented and crowded close!

Just a commonplace plot, old as the proverbial hills, yet the knowing author, merely by applying doubtful tension throughout the action, then releasing it at the climax by logically righting the wrong, has raised his effort to the sublime.

When you and I, fellow writers, can do this we will have started well on the way to real success in writing for the screen.

Screen Drama League

(Continued from Page 21)

this is being overcome by the careful training of screen authors, and that the photoplay of the future will go far beyond the present mark.

The Better Pictures Association has formulated definite plans for assuring only the best in screen entertainment. Although opposing censorship, its members believe that committees will solve the problem. On these committees will be representatives of all the churches, clubs, educational bodies, the producers, etc., who will place a seal of merit on productions considered especially good, at the same time

conducting publicity campaigns against ones considered inferior. By this means, the public, through bodies absolutely representative, and which can be influenced by no questions of politics or of finances, will be kept informed regarding the films; and by merely withholding patronage from such pictures as are deemed of low standard can soon bring the Eighth Art to a high level.

Student Comment

(Continued from Page 31)

as did the other interested ones, after being convinced that a sample of my ability had been sent out, to bless the world.

Do you know that a kind editor, firmly, yea very firmly, consumed the space of several pages in order to enlighten me to the extent of seeing that I had submitted a fairly decent "climax" in the one reel enclosed within my lovely blue coverlet, and in a tactful manner suggested that I supply the first, reel so that the second reel might have something to lean upon?

I had "seen" my picture through in such haste, and was wrapped up to such extent in the climax, that the half portion submitted was all climax. It is needless to say here that I am building the front, and have donned the sackcloth-and-ashes costume to work in.

Asks Proper Credit Given to Author

Editor,
The Photodramatist:

I would greatly appreciate your bringing to the attention of your readers an inadvertent oversight on the part of the publishers of "Opportunities in the Motion Picture Industry," a set of books which has just been brought out by the Photoplay Research Society, of which I am president.

An article entitled "The Art Director—His Duties and Qualifications," credited to Mr. Max Parker, art director of the famous Players-Lasky Corporation, was in reality written by Mr. G. Harrison Wiley of the Lasky art staff from an interview with Mr. Parker. I feel that it is only just that Mr. Wiley receive full credit for this very able contribution to the literature of the screen.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Wiley for his generous assistance in aiding us to secure material from other departments of the Lasky organization.

Yours very truly

Roy L. Manker,

President, Photoplay Research Society



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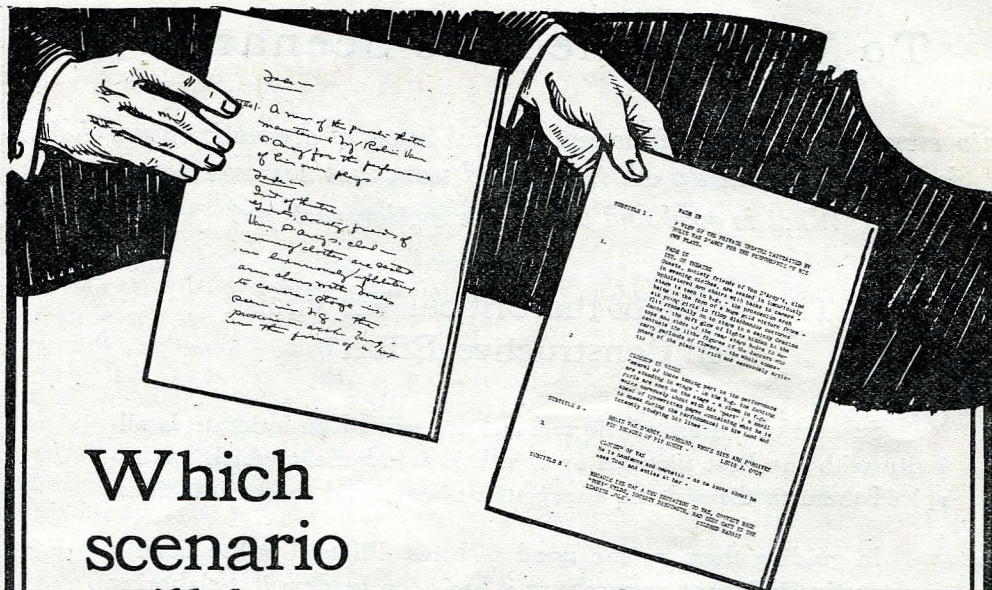
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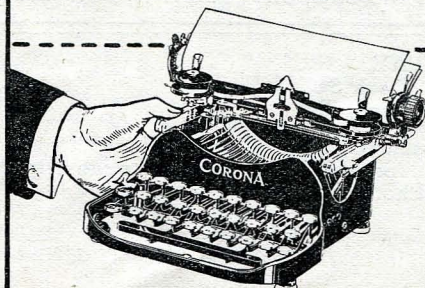
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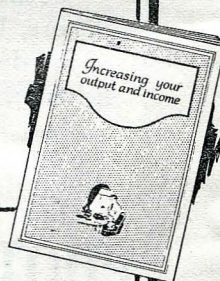


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If you are working on a Western, either for the magazines or for the screen, this amusing but enlightening article on what to avoid in painting the alleged wild and woolly West will be invaluable.

This is only one of the features of direct interest to writers in the June issue of *Screenland*. The "What's the Matter with My Story" department, giving constructive and unbiased criticism of scenarios to subscribers, has been the saving of many a fundamentally sound but technically weak scenario.

"Behind the Camera with Elinor Glyn", the second of a valuable series of articles explaining the intricacies of picture-making, is of very real value to the aspiring scenarist.

Louis Weadock's stories of film people fairly reek with studio atmosphere which screen writers would do well to absorb.

H. L. Mencken, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Charlie Chaplin and Walt Mason are other noted contributors to this smashing issue of *the writer's own screen magazine*.

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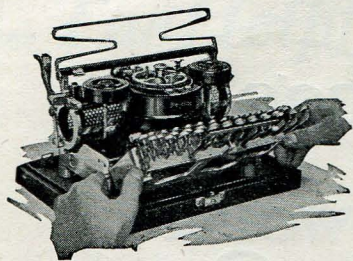
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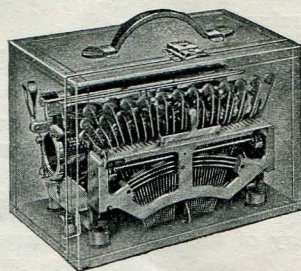
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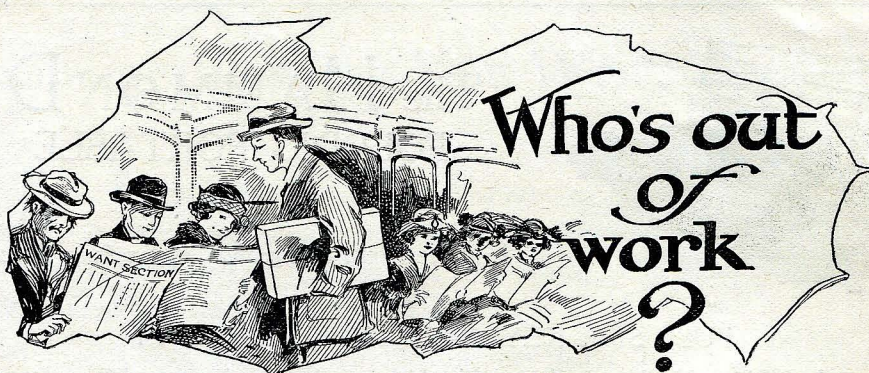
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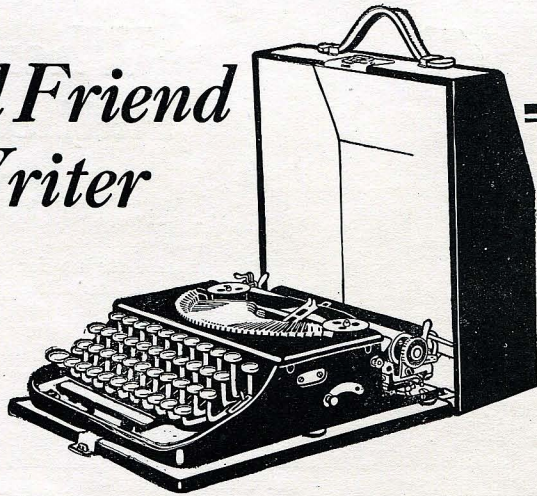
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